

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 IO-13 ACDA-07 AID-05

TRSE-00 /077 W

-----161457Z 060461 /42

O 161342Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2605

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 1245

FOR LEURS AND TODMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, NU

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES HUMAN RIGHTS WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA

REF: MANAGUA 1072; B. MANAGUA 1009; C. MANAGUA 1058;

D. MANAGUA 1032; E. MANAGUA 0836

1. SUMMARY: DURING MARCH 14 MEETING, AMBASSADOR PRESENTED SOMOZA A COPY OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON NICARAGUA RECENTLY RELEASED BY U.S. CONGRESS. SOMOZA STRONGLY CRITICIZED N.Y. TIMES ARTICLES ABOUT CATHOLIC CHURCH ALLEGATIONS OF NATIONAL GUARD MASSACRES AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. AMBASSADOR WAS ASKED BY SOMOZA TO DISOWN MARCH 3RD N.Y. TIMES INTERVIEW, AND WAS REFUSED. FURTHER STEPS ARE SUGGESTED TO DEPARTMENT TO PERSUADE SOMOZA AND NICARAGUAN PEOPLE OF SERIOUSNESS OF U.S. CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A CALL ON PRESIDENT SOMOZA AFTERNOON MARCH 14, 1977, WE GAVE HIM A COPY OF UNCLASSIFIED HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON NICARAGUA THAT DEPARTMENT FORWARDED TO U.S. CONGRESS AND RELEASED MARCH 12TH. SOMOZA WAS IN THE UNITED STATES LAST WEEK AND RETURNED TO NICARAGUA ON MARCH 12TH SO THERE WAS NO OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSMIT COPY OF REPORT TO HIM BEFOORE CONGRESSIONAL RELEASE.

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3. AFTER THANKING ME FOR THE REPORT, HE LAUNCHED INTO A STRONG CRITICISM OF THE TWO RECENT N.Y. TIMES ARTICLES THAT HAD REPORTED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ALLEGED BY THE AMERICAN CAPUCHINS AND THE NICARAGUAN BISHOPS IN THEIR PASTORAL LETTER. HE STATED THAT IT WAS THE CAPUCHIN BISHOP OF ZELAYA WHO HAD INSISTED ON INSERTING THE CATALOGUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS CHARGES IN THE BISHOPS' PASTORAL LETTER. HE ADMITTED THAT NATIONAL GUARD (GN) HAD STEPPED UP ITS ACTIVITIES IN THE

ZELAYA AREA, AND THAT SOME INNOCENT PEOPLE PROBABLY HAD BEEN KILLED IN THESE PRIMITIVE BACKLANDS. HE DENIED AGAIN THE POSSIBILITY OF MASS EXECUTIONS AS ALLEGED BY THE AMERICAN CAPUCHINS, WHICH HE QUALIFIED WITH QUOTE AT LEAST THAT I KNOW OF UNQUOTE.

4. SOMOZA WAS TOLD THAT THESE ALLEGATIONS OF GN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS COULD NOT BE EASILY DISMISSED BECAUSE THEY CAME FROM CREDIBLE, MODERATE CHURCH SOURCES. THEY MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, AND SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED. WE FURTHER STATED THAT THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OVER THE PAST YEAR OR SO TO CONVINCE US THAT SOME HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS HAD OCCURRED, PARTICULARLY AGAINST CAMPE- SINOS. SOMOZA THEN EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN OVER A STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO ME AND PUBLISHED IN THE N.Y. TIMES (MARCH 3RD). HE ASKED ME IF I HAD BEEN ACCURATELY QUOTED. WE REPLIED THAT THE TIMES STORY CONTAINED A MISQUOTATION BUT THAT ESSENTIALLY IT REPORTED CORRECTLY WHAT HAD BEEN SAID IN THE INTERVIEW.

5. THE TIMES REPORTED ME AS SAYING QUOTE WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SOME OF THE ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ARE ACCURATE AND OUR CONCERN HAS BEEN MADE CLEAR TO THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS DURING THE PAST YEAR UNQUOTE. THE ONLY DISCREPANCY IS THAT TIMES REPORTED WAS TOLD THAT ALLEGATIONS QUOTE MAY BE ACCURATE UNQUOTE WHEREAS THE TIMES REPORTED QUOTE ARE ACCURATE UNQUOTE. SOMOZA ASKED ME TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE N.Y. TIMES STATING THAT WE HAD BEEN MISQUOTED. WE REFUSED ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE TIMES STORY WAS CORRECT IN ALLESSENTIALS, AND THAT IT WOULD SERVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE TO OPEN THIS MATTER AGAIN. HE INSISTED AND SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD BE COMPELLED TO SEND THE DEPARTMENT A NOTE. WE REPLIED THAT THAT WAS OBVIOUSLY HIS PREROGATIVE BUT THAT WE DID NOT BEL-

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IEVE IT WOULD SERVE HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST.

6. SOMOZA HAS BEEN WARNED FOR OVER A YEAR THAT CONTINUED CHARGES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WOULD PLACE AN INCREASING STRAIN ON OUR RELATIONS. UNFORTUNATELY, ALLEGATIONS FROM USUALLY CREDIBLE SOURCES CONTINUE TO BE RECEIVED REGULARLY BY THE EMBASSY AND CHURCH AUTHORITIES, THE LATEST BEING THE AMERICAN CAPUCHINS' ACCUSATION OF GN MASSA-  
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CRES OF CAMPESINO MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THESE RECENT REPORTS ARE ESPECIALLY DISTURBING AND LET ME TO CONCLUDE THAT OUR REPEATED AND PRIVATE EXPRESSION OF CONCERN SHOULD BE MORE CLEARLY MANIFESTED, AS IN MY CALCULATED AND MEASURED N.Y. TIMES INTERVIEW.

7. THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN NICARAGUA AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE GON TO BELIEVE THE U.S. IS AN UNCRITICAL SUPPORTER OF THE REGIME. IT HAS BEEN OUR POLICY TO TRY TO DISABUSE THESE SECTORS OF THAT BELIEF BY AVOIDING OVER-IDENTIFICATION WITH THE SOMOZA REGIME AND MAINTAINING BALANCED RELATIONS WITH OTHER POLITICAL SECTORS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SOMOZA REGIME ENGAGES IN AN

UNCEASING EFFORT TO CONVEY THE NOTION TO NICARAGUANS THAT IT HAS THE FULL SUPPORT AND APPROVAL OF THE USG, THEREBY LENDING THE REGIME INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY. DURING A PERIOD OF HEIGHTENED FOCUS AND EMPHASIS ON PROMOTING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, TO BE LESS THAN FORCEFUL IN OUR APPROACH TO THE GON WOULD SUGGEST TO ALL SECTORS OF NICARAGUAN SOCIETY, AND PARTICULARLY THE ANTI-SOMOZA OPPOSITION, THAT THE SOMOZA GOVERNMENT IS EXEMPT FROM OUR CRITICAL VIEW ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE PRECISELY BECAUSE OF A QUOTE FAVORED RELATIONSHIP UNQUOTE AND SOMOZA'S LOYAL PRO-U.S. POLICIES.

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2606

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAGUA 1245

FOR LEURS AND TODMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

8. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT FURTHER STEPS BE TAKEN NOW TO PERSUADE THE PRESIDENT OF OUR SERIOUSNESS AND PRODUCE RESULTS WHICH WILL CONVINCE THE NICARAGUAN PEOPLE THAT OUR PRIMARY CONSIDERATION, IN THIS CONTEXT, IS TO ADVANCE HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE.

9. PRESIDENT SOMOZA IS CLEARLY NERVOUS ABOUT HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE, BUT HE APPARENTLY BELIEVES HE CAN MANAGE THE REPEATED CHARGES OF NATIONAL GUARD ABUSES OF CAMPESINOS WITHOUT EXPOSING THE NATIONAL GUARD, THE MAJOR BULWARK OF SOMOZA FAMILY POWER, TO AN INVESTIGATION.

10. DEPT IS REQUESTED TO ADVISE NICARAGUAN AMBASSADOR, OR SEND US INSTRUCTIONS TO ADVISE THE PRESIDENT, OR BOTH, THAT: A) MY CONCERN OVER REPORTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AS REPORTED IN THE N.Y. TIMES REPRESENTS THE POLICY OF THE ADMINISTRATION; B) THAT THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS COMING

FROM RESPONSIBLE NICARAGUAN SOURCES (I.E., THE BISHOPS, THE CAPUCHINS AND MEMBERS OF THE NICARGUAN CONGRESS) SHOULD BE IMPARTIALLY INVESTIGATED AND, IF FOUND TO BE TRUE, THAT APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINARY ACTION BE TAKEN TO PREVENT FURTHER ABUSE; C) THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS PREPARED TO REVIEW ITS OVER-ALL RELATIONSHIP WITH NICARAGUA DEPEND  
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ING UPON WHETHER AN IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION IS CONDUCTED AND THE RESULTS OF SUCH AN INVESTIGATION; AND D) THAT IF THE GON IS NOT WILLING TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN CONDUCTING OR FACILITATING AN IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION, WE ARE ALSO PREPARED TO PUBLICLY EXPRESS OUR CONCERN AND RAISE THE MATTER OF THE ALLEGATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE IAHC OF THE OAS.

11. IMMEDIATE DEPT ACTION WOULD BE APPRECIATED.  
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## Message Attributes

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